

Draft Environmental Assessment

Harrison Lake Boat Ramp Improvements



November 9, 2007



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

**Harrison Lake Boat Ramp Improvements
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed Action:

Development	<u> X </u>
Renovation	<u> </u>
Maintenance	<u> </u>
Land Acquisition	<u> </u>
Equipment Acquisition	<u> </u>
Other (Describe)	<u> </u>

- 2. Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605 MCA, which directs Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to acquire, develop, and operate a system of fishing access sites. The legislature established a funding account to ensure that this function would be accomplished. Sections 23-1-105, 23-1-106, 15-1-122, 61-3-321, and 87-1-303, MCA, authorize the collection fees and charges for the use of state park system units and fishing access sites, and contain rule-making authority for their use, occupancy, and protection. Sections 23-1-101 MCA allows FWP to plan and develop outdoor recreational resources in the state and receive and expend funds, including federal funds. The opportunity for public comment regarding the proposed project is provided under MCA section 23-1-110. See Appendix 1 for HB 495 qualification.

The Boat Fee in Lieu of Tax revenue includes 20% of all fees in lieu of tax collected by the county treasurer and is used by FWP to improve regional boating facilities under the control of FWP (Section 23-2-518, MCA).

The Dingell-Johnson bill was passed in the U.S. Legislature August 9, 1950, and was amended to the Wallop-Breaux bill in 1984. A percentage of funds spent on fishing equipment and motorboat-associated fuel are apportioned back to the states based on the land and water area and the number of fishing licenses sold. This bill requires that 15% of these funds be spent on motorboat access projects. Twenty five percent of the total project cost must be from nonfederal funds. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service administers Wallop-Breaux funds, which will be requested for use in this project.

2. Name of Project

Harrison Lake Boat Ramp Improvements

3. **Project Sponsor(s)**

Allan Kuser
Fishing Access Site Coordinator
Montana FWP, HQ
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-7885

Tom Greason
Fishing Access Site Manager
Montana FWP, Region 3
1400 South 19th
Bozeman, MT 59718
406-994-6987

4. **Estimated Timeline:**

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 2008

Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2008

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 30%

5. Location of Proposed Action:

Harrison Lake Fishing Access Site (FAS) is located on Willow Creek Reservoir, 4 miles east of Harrison, MT on County Road. The site is located in Madison County: Township 1 south, Range 1 west, Section 34; and Township 2 south, Range 1 west, Section 3. The site is 40 acres and owned by FWP.

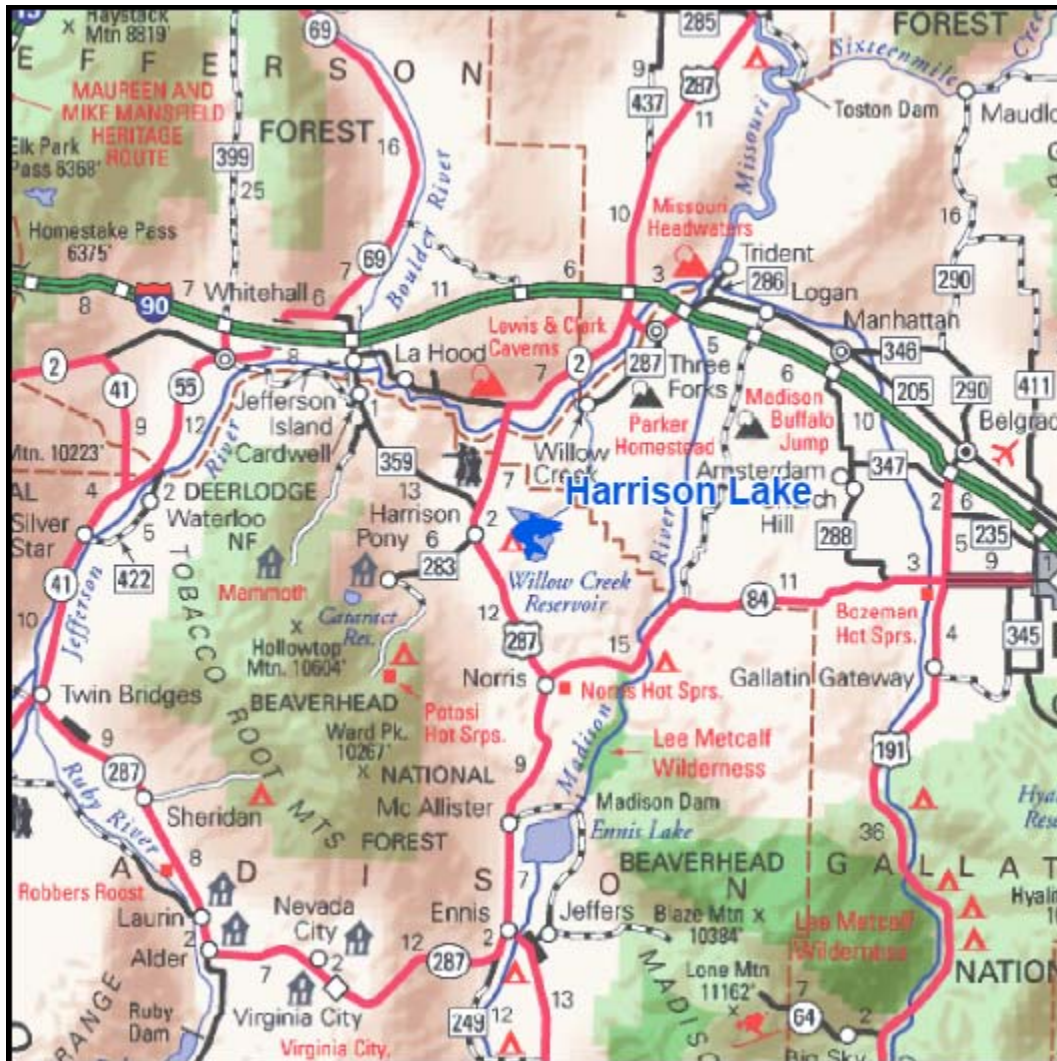


Figure 1: Fish delineates location of Harrison Lake FAS.

6. Project Size: Estimate of the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) Developed: | (d) Floodplain..... |
| Residential <u>0</u> acres | <u>0.8</u> acres |
| Industrial <u>0</u> acres | |
| (b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation..... <u>0</u> acres | (e) Productive: |
| | irrigated cropland <u>0</u> acres |
| | dry cropland <u>0</u> acres |
| | forestry <u>0</u> acres |
| (c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas..... <u>0</u> acres | rangeland <u>0</u> acres |
| | other <u>0</u> acres |

7. Map/site plan

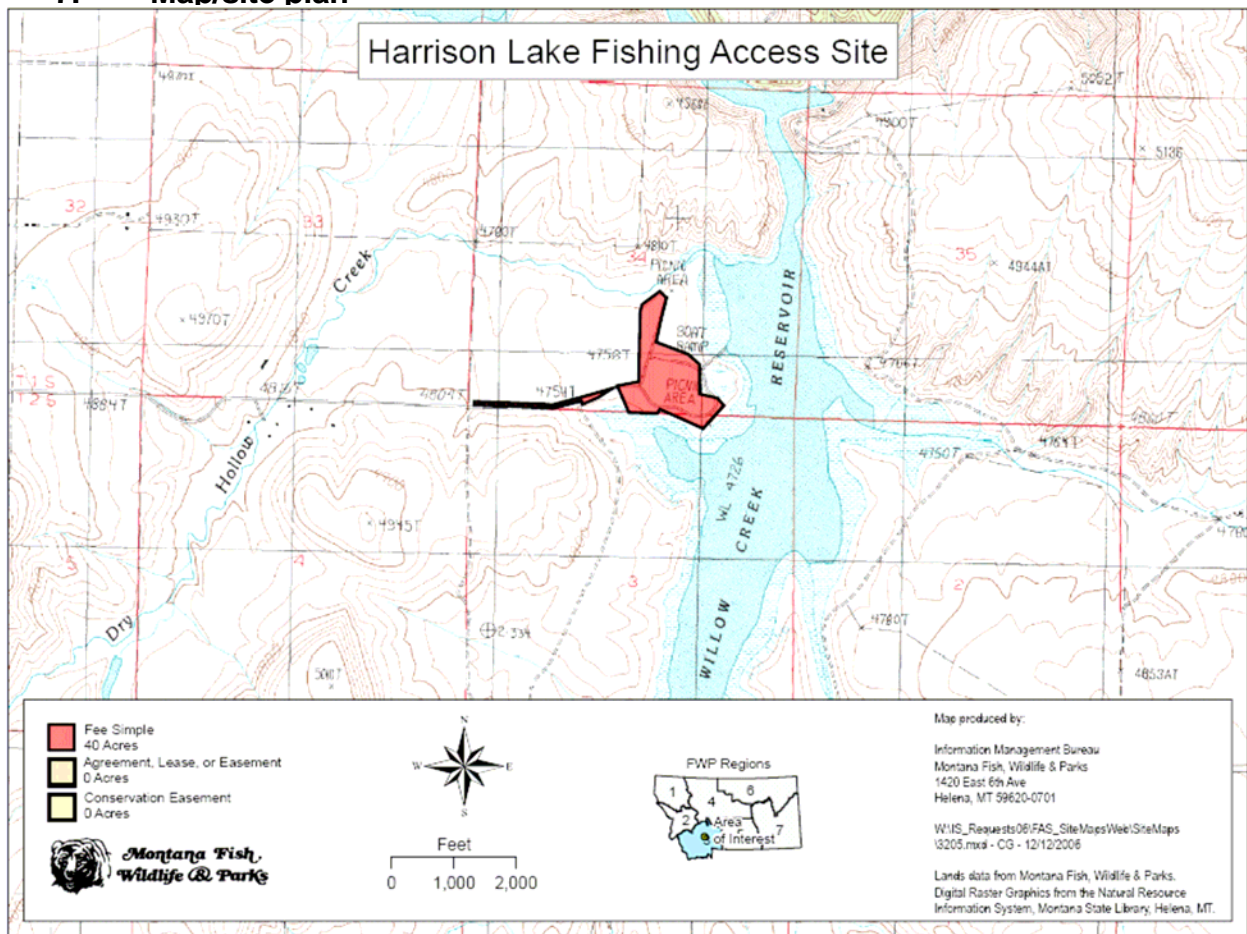


Figure 2: Topographic map depicting approximate boundaries (red shaded polygons; 40 acres) of FWP Harrison Lake FAS.

8. Listing of any other Local, State, or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks		124
Montana Department of Environmental Quality		318 (if required)
US Corps of Engineers		404
Madison County	Floodplain Permit (if required)	

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
FWP Boat-in-Lieu of Tax Account Funds	\$12,500 (25%)
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Wallop-Breaux	\$37,500 (75%)
<u>Motorboat Funds</u>	
Total	\$50,000 (100%)

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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9. Summary of the proposed action:

Harrison Lake FAS Description and Background

Harrison Lake FAS is located on Willow Creek Reservoir (713 acres), which is a tributary of Willow Creek. The reservoir is an irrigation reservoir that is located four miles east of Harrison, Montana on county roads. The FAS is approximately 40 acres. There are 12 primitive campsites, latrines and a boat launch at the site. The site is primarily used for camping, angling, and boating. In the spring and fall, angling is the predominant activity. Summer time sees an increase in water skiers and jet skiers from the Butte and Bozeman areas. In the winter, when the site is accessible, there is ice fishing available.

In 2005 and angler survey identified Willow Creek Reservoir as the 129th most fished body of water in Montana. The Regional rank was 27 and there were 3,766 days fished with 65 trips. Game fish opportunities include rainbow trout and brown trout. Other fish species include longnose sucker and white sucker. Rainbow trout were stocked periodically into the lake from 1997 through 2005.

Many fish and wildlife species utilize or are near the FAS, including some species of concern (e.g., bald eagle, black tern, and grey wolf). Bald eagles are seen on the lake, but no nest has been located within one mile of the FAS. Arnie Dood, FWP Endangered Species Biologist, does not anticipate any impacts on listed threatened or endangered species (personal comment September 17, 2007).

Spotted knapweed and Canadian thistle are present at the site. Currently FWP manages noxious weeds on the site in accordance with the Region 3 Weed Management Plan and in concert with the Madison county weed program.

Proposed Action, Purpose, and Benefits of the Action

FWP proposes to widen and lengthen the boat ramp to alleviate congestion, enhance access during reservoir drawdown, and remove deposited soil materials beyond the boat ramp to allow boats access during low water conditions. The boat launch would be widened to 28 feet beginning at 16 feet down the ramp for approximately 160 feet. In addition, the ramp would be extended 20 feet from the bottom by the full 28 feet width (Figure 3). Approximately 300 cubic yards of material would be removed from the bottom area of the ramp. The proposed plan would improve the boat ramp to manage the current use and to allow safe use throughout the year. The boat launch is a double lane boat launch (20 feet wide by 176 feet long); however, the floating dock takes up a large portion of the boat launch. The result is that only one trailer can access the water at a time. Due to the popularity of the FAS, the boat launch is often backed up with people waiting to launch watercraft. Throughout the irrigation season, the reservoir depth decreases such that in the fall of 2006 the bottom of the concrete boat launch was 20 feet from the waters edge.

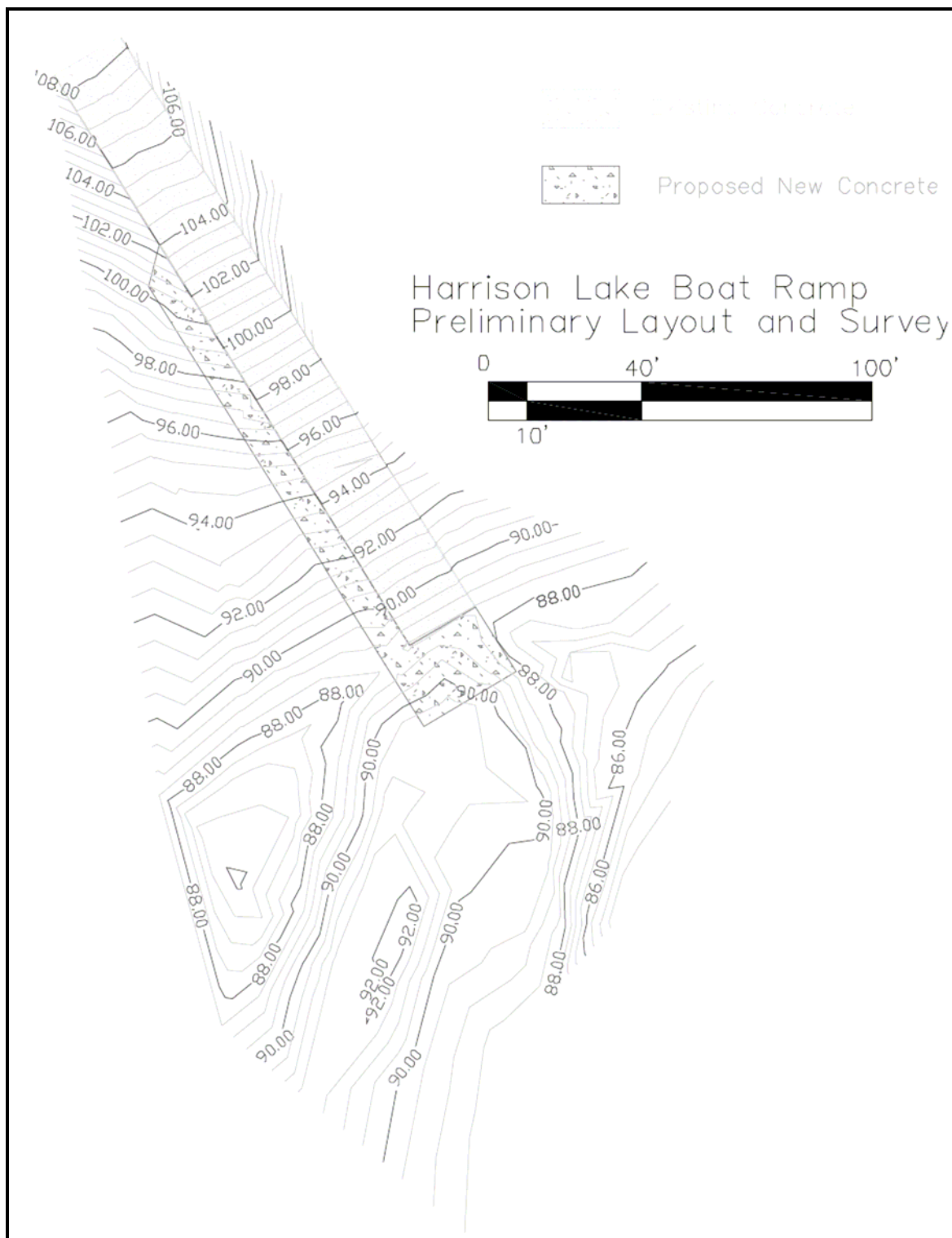


Figure 3. Harrison Lake Boat Ramp extension, preliminary site plan.



Picture 1. Boat launch and boat dock at Harrison Lake Fishing Access Site. The boat dock takes up one lane of traffic down the doublewide boat launch. The result is that only one truck/trailer can launch watercraft at a time.



Picture 2. Another view of the boat launch and boat dock at Harrison Lake Fishing Access Site. Boat dock can be seen at the bottom of the boat launch blocking half of the boat launch.



Picture 3



Picture 4

Pictures 3 and 4. Two different views of the boat launch at Harrison Lake Fishing Access Site taken in early fall. A large amount of sediment at the bottom of the ramp can be seen.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

Do not widen and lengthen the boat launch. Congestion at the boat launch would continue as only one trailer can launch watercraft at a time. The boat launch would continue to be inaccessible when water levels are low due to irrigation pressure on Willow Creek Reservoir.

Alternative B: Preferred alternative

FWP proposes to widen and lengthen the existing concrete boat launch and remove deposited soil materials beyond the boat ramp. The boat launch would be widened to 28 feet beginning at 16 feet down the ramp for approximately 160 feet. In addition, the ramp would be extended 20 feet from the bottom by the full 28 feet width, and riprap would be added to protect the ramp from undercutting. Approximately 300 cubic yards of material would be removed from the bottom area of the ramp. Widening the boat launch would allow two truck/trailers to launch watercraft at the same time. In addition, lengthening the boat launch and removing sediment would allow launching activities to occur during drawdown of the reservoir for irrigation. The proposed plan would improve the boat ramp to manage the current use and to allow safe use throughout the year.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

FWP engineering staff would oversee project construction; thus, the contractor would be held to the terms of the project, such as limiting soil and vegetation disturbance to the immediate project area and seeding disturbed areas to aid in reclamation.

A short-term turbidity permit would be received from the Department of Environmental Quality (if required) prior to construction. FWP engineering staff will design this project using Best Management Practices, which would limit turbidity during construction, and changes in surface water runoff or drainage patterns once project is completed.

PART III. MEPA CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

If the No Action Alternative were, selected FWP would continue to maintain Harrison Lake FAS as it has done in the past.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X			1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X			
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other		X				

1a. The proposed project would not alter geological substructure. Soil stability would be minimally impacted by extending and widening the boat launch, and removing soils deposited at the bottom of the boat ramp. Erosion and surface runoff should be minimal due to the low slope. Best Management Practices (see Appendix 3) would be utilized to minimize these impacts during design and construction of the proposed project.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X			2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. <u>For P-R/D-J projects</u> , will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other		X				

2a. Minor amounts of dust would be temporarily created during construction. Best Management Practices (see Appendix 3) would be utilized to minimize the dust during construction.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. <u>WATER</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X			3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X			See 3a.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				3l.
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:		X				

3a. The proposed project would occur in areas that have been previously disturbed. Increased discharge into surface water or alterations of drainage patterns would be minor and temporary during construction.

3l. The project will not affect a designated floodplain. The area has not been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Administration on the FIRM Index.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				See 4a.
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				4e.
f. For P-R/D-J , will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				4f.
g. Other:		X				

4a. Development would occur in areas that have been previously disturbed. There would be a minor change in plant species in the area of construction.

4c. The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) found no records of plant species of concern.

4e. The FAS has a minor infestation of spotted knapweed and Canadian thistle at the FAS. FWP manages noxious weeds on the site in accordance with the Region Three Weed Management Plan and in concert with the Madison County weed program. This management would not be altered by the proposed project.

4f. No wetlands or prime and unique farmland would be altered by the proposed project.

A search of the Montana Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) web site (<http://maps2.nris.state.mt.us/scripts/esrimap.dll?name=LocMap&Cmd=Map>) found that no Natural Heritage Program Wetlands, DEG High Priority Wetlands, or Riparian Wetland Research program sites existed on or near Willow Creek Reservoir.

The boat launch is located on Nuley Rock outcrop complex, 8-35% slope (91; listed by SSURGO soil mapping web site <http://maps2.nris.state.mt.us/mapper/PLSSSearch.asp>). This soil is not listed as a prime or other important farmland in Madison County (<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/Report.aspx?Survey=MT083&UseState=MT>).

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. FISH/WILDLIFE	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				See 5a.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				See 5a.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				See 5f.
i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:		X				

5a. The proposed project is to extend and lengthen the boat ramp, and remove soil materials deposited at the bottom of the boat ramp. There would be no changes to game and nongame species diversity, abundance, or habitat.

5f. The MNHP located black tern *Chlidonias niger*, bald eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, and gray wolf *Canis lupus* within one mile of the FAS. Since the FAS has been used for public access in the past, and the proposed project is not intended to increase access only to manage current access it should have no additional impacts on these species.

Black tern is listed as sensitive by the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and S3B/G4 by MNHP. This ranking by MNHP indicated the species is potentially at risk of extirpation in the state and globally uncommon

The Bald Eagle was delisted as threatened by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on August 8, 2007 and fall under the Bald Eagle Protection Act. Bald eagles occur in the area of the FAS. The nearest nest is approximately two map miles (straight-line distance). The FAS has historically been used for public access and the proposed project would not alter this use. The proposed project would not impact this nest, or bald eagle habitat. Guidelines established in the FWP Bald Eagle Management Plan would be followed.

Gray wolves are listed as an endangered experimental population by USFWS, endangered by U.S. Forest Service (USFS), special status by BLM, and S3/G4 by MNHP. The ranking by MNHP indicates the species is potentially at risk of extirpation in the state and uncommon globally. Arnie Dood, FWP Endangered Species Biologist, does not anticipate any impacts on listed threatened or endangered species (personal comment September 17, 2007).

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				See 6a.
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

- 6a. The proposed project is not intended to increase visitor use, but to alleviate congestion caused by current use, and extend the usable season of the boat ramp. Noise levels would increase temporarily during construction, but overall noise levels at the reservoir should not be altered by this project.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____		X				

7a. The proposed project is designed to manage current use and not to increase use at the site. Land use would not change.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. For P-R/D-L , will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			X			See 8a.
e. Other:		X				

8a. The FWP Region 3 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines and conducted by people trained in safe handling techniques. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				9a.
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

- 9a. The proposed project is designed to manage current use and not to increase use at the site. The proposed FAS would improve the quality of tourism recreation in the area of Harrison Lake. It would improve visitors' access to the site and extend the time in which the boat ramp would be usable.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: _____			X			10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other: _____						

10a. There would be maintenance responsibilities associated with the proposed project, but FWP would assume all responsibility and integrate maintenance of the larger boat launch in its existing FAS maintenance schedule.

10e. There would be no revenue generated from the proposed action.

10f. The site is currently maintained by a caretaker and FWP. It costs approximately \$6,000 per year to maintain this site, and \$6,000 per year for personnel services. Maintenance includes weed control, road grading, toilet pumping, and grounds keeping. A concrete boat ramp is mostly maintenance free, with the exception of removing silt from wave action. The proposed project would not increase the maintenance costs at the FAS.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X			11c.
d. For P-R/D-I , will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:		X				

11c. The proposed FAS would improve the quality of tourism recreation in the area of Harrison Lake. It would improve visitors' access to the site and extend the time in which the boat ramp would be usable (See Appendix 2: Tourism Report).

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J , will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		X				See 12a.
e. Other:						

12a. FWP consulted with SHPO regarding any heritage properties that are located within the area and would be affected by the proposed project. On September 14, 2007, SHPO responded that there was a low likelihood that cultural properties would be impacted by the proposed project.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:						
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. The site has been used in the past for public launching, and this action would continue and improve that use.

The proposed project would minimally impact the physical environment. Best Management Practices (see Appendix 3) would be utilized to minimize impacts to the land and water during construction of the proposed project. All improvements would occur in areas that have been previously disturbed. The MNHP located wolf, bald eagle, and black tern within one mile of this property. Since the property has historically been used for public access, this action should have no additional impacts on these species. The FAS has a minor infestation of spotted knapweed and Canadian thistle. FWP would continue implementing Region 3's weed management program.

The proposed project would minimally impact the human environment. The proposed project is intended to manage current use and not to increase use. Impacts on noise would be limited to construction. The proposed FAS would improve the quality of tourism on Harrison Lake. Before construction, FWP would identify any heritage properties that are located within the area affected by a proposed project and shall consult with the SHPO regarding how to address any impacts the project would have on any cultural site.

PART V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public Involvement:

The public would be notified in the following ways to comment on the EA of the Harrison Lake Boat Ramp Improvements

1. Legal notices would be published in the *Bozeman Chronicle* and the *Helena Independent Record*
2. Legal notice and the draft EA would be posted on the Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices>
3. Direct notice would be given to adjacent landowners.
4. Draft EA's would be available at the Region 3 headquarters in Bozeman and the State Headquarters in Helena.

This level of public involvement is appropriate for a project of this scale.

2. Duration of comment period.

The public comment period would be 30 days. Comments will be accepted starting November 9, 2007, ending December 7, 2007. Comments may be emailed to tgreason@mt.gov, or written comments may be sent to the following address:

Tom Greason
Fishing Access Site Manager
Montana FWP, Region 3
1400 South 19th
Bozeman, MT 59718
406-994-6987

PART VI. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

NO

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action: therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Allan Kuser
FWP FAS Coordinator
1420 East Sixth Ave
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 444-7885

Tom Greason
Fishing Access Manager
1400 South 19th
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 994-6987

Sally Schrank
Independent Contractor
1416 Winne Ave
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 443-3585

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division Region 3
Wildlife Division Region 3
Fisheries Division Region 3
Lands Section
Design and Construction Bureau

Montana Department of Commerce—Tourism
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Montana Natural Heritage Program—Natural Resources Information System
PO Box 201800
1515 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1800

APPENDIX 1
HB495
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date August 20, 2007

Person Reviewing Sally Schrank

Project Location: Harrison Lake Fishing Access Site (FAS) is located on Willow Creek Reservoir, 4 miles east of Harrison, MT on County Road. The site is located in Madison County: Township 1 south, Range 1 west, Section 34; and Township 2 south, Range 1 west, Section 3. The site is 40 acres and owned by FWP.

Description of Proposed Work: FWP proposes to widen and lengthen the existing concrete boat launch, and remove soil materials deposited at the bottom of the boat ramp. Widening the boat launch would allow two truck/trailers to launch watercraft at the same time. In addition, removing soil materials deposited at the bottom of the boat ramp and lengthening the boat launch would allow launching activities to occur during drawdown of the reservoir for irrigation. The proposed project would enhance public access by alleviating congestion and improving access for motorboats.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check ☐ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

☐ A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?

Comments:

☐ B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?

Comments:

☒ C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?

Comments: Soil Material would be removed from the bottom of the ramp, and concrete and riprap would be brought in to widen & lengthen the ramp.

☐ D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?

Comments:

☐ E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?

Comments:

☐ F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?

Comments:

☐ G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?

Comments:

☐ H. Any new above ground utility lines?

Comments:

☐ I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?

Comments:

☐ J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?

Comments:

If any of the above are checked, HB 495 rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX 2
TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name, project description portions, and submit this form to:

Carol Crockett, Tourism Development Specialist
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
301 South Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59601

Project Name: Harrison Lake Fishing Access Site Improvements

Project Description: Harrison Lake Fishing Access Site (FAS) is located on Willow Creek Reservoir, 4 miles east of Harrison, MT on County Road. The site is located in Madison County: Township 1 south, Range 1 west, Section 34; and Township 2 south, Range 1 west, Section 3. The site is 40 acres and owned by FWP. FWP proposes to widen and lengthen the existing concrete boat launch. Widening the boat launch would allow two truck/trailers to launch watercraft at the same time. In addition, lengthening the boat launch would allow launching activities to occur during drawdown of the reservoir for irrigation. The proposed project would enhance public access by alleviating congestion and improving access for motorboats.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

As described, the project has the potential to positively impact the tourism & recreation industry economy.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

As described, the project would improve the quality of tourism & recreational opportunities.

Signature: Carol Crockett

Date: August 23, 2007

Appendix 3
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR FISHING ACCESS SITES
10-02-02

I. ROADS

A. Road Planning and location

1. Minimize the number of roads constructed at the FAS through comprehensive road planning and recognizing foreseeable future uses.
2. Use existing roads, unless use of such roads would cause or aggravate an erosion problem.
3. Fit the road to the topography by locating roads on natural benches and following natural contours. Avoid long, steep road grades and narrow canyons.
4. Locate roads on stable geology, including well-drained soils and rock formations that tend to dip into the slope. Avoid slumps and slide-prone areas characterized by steep slopes, highly weathered bedrock, clay beds, concave slopes, hummocky topography, and rock layers that dip parallel to the slope. Avoid wet areas, including seeps, wetlands, wet meadows, and natural drainage channels.
5. Minimize the number of stream crossings.
6. Choose stable stream crossing sites. "Stable" refers to streambanks with erosion-resistant materials and in hydrologically safe spots.

B. Road Design

1. Design roads to the minimum standard necessary to accommodate anticipated use and equipment. The need for higher engineering standards can be alleviated through proper road-use management. "Standard" refers to road width.
2. Design roads to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns. Vary road grades to reduce concentrated flow in road drainage ditches, culverts, and on fill slopes and road surfaces.

C. Drainage from Road Surface

1. Provide adequate drainage from the surface of all permanent and temporary roads. Use outsloped, insloped or crowned roads, installing proper drainage features. Space road drainage features so peak flow on road surface or in ditches will not exceed their capacity.
 - a. Outsloped roads provide means of dispersing water in a low-energy flow from the road surface. Outsloped roads are appropriate when fill slopes are stable, drainage will not flow directly into stream channels, and transportation safety can be met.
 - b. For in-sloped roads, plan ditch gradients steep enough, generally greater than 2%, but less than 8%, to prevent sediment deposition and ditch erosion. The steeper gradients may be suitable for more stable soils; use the lower gradients for less stable soils.
 - c. Design and install road surface drainage features at adequate spacing to control erosion; steeper gradients require more frequent drainage features. Properly

constructed drain dips can be an economical method of road surface drainage.
Construct drain dips deep enough into the subgrade so that traffic will not obliterate them.

2. For ditch relief/culverts, construct stable catch basins at stable angles. Protect the inflow end of crossdrain culverts from plugging and armor if in erodible soil. Skewing ditch relief culverts 20 to 30 degrees toward the inflow from the ditch will improve inlet efficiency.
3. Provide energy dissipators (rock piles, slash, log chunks, etc.) where necessary to reduce erosion at outlet of drainage features. Crossdrains, culverts, water bars, dips, and other drainage structures should not discharge onto erodible soils or fill slopes without outfall protection.
4. Route road drainage through adequate filtration zones, or other sediment-settling structures. Install road drainage features above stream crossings to route discharge into filtration zones before entering a stream.

D. Construction/Reconstruction

1. Stabilize erodible, exposed soils by seeding, compacting, riprapping, benching, mulching, or other suitable means.
2. At the toe of potentially erodible fill slopes, particularly near stream channels, pile slash in a row parallel to the road to trap sediment. When done concurrently with road construction, this is one method to effectively control sediment movement and it provides an economical way of disposing of roadway slash. Limit the height, width, and length of these "slash filter windows" so not to impede wildlife movement. Sediment fabric fences or other methods may be used if effective.
3. Construct cut and fill slopes at stable angles to prevent sloughing and subsequent erosion.
4. Avoid incorporating potentially unstable woody debris in the fill portion of the road prism. Where possible, leave existing rooted trees or shrubs at the toe of the fill slope to stabilize the fill.
5. Place debris, overburden, and other waste materials associated with construction and maintenance activities in a location to avoid entry into streams. Include these waste areas in soil stabilization planning for the road.
6. When using existing roads, reconstruct only to the extent necessary to provide adequate drainage and safety; avoid disturbing stable road surfaces. Consider abandoning existing roads when their use would aggravate erosion.

E. Road Maintenance

1. Grade road surfaces only as often as necessary to maintain a stable running surface and to retain the original surface drainage.
2. Maintain erosion control features through periodic inspection and maintenance, including cleaning dips and crossdrains, repairing ditches, marking culvert inlets to aid in location, and clearing debris from culverts.
3. Avoid cutting the toe of cut slopes when grading roads, pulling ditches, or plowing snow.
4. Avoid using roads during wet periods if such use would likely damage the road drainage features. Consider gates, barricades, or signs to limit use of roads during wet periods.

II. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (parking areas, campsites, trails, ramps, restrooms)

A. Site Design

1. Design a site that best fits the topography, soil type, and stream character, while minimizing soil disturbance and economically accomplishing recreational objectives. Keep roads and parking lots at least 50 feet from water; if closer, mitigate with vegetative buffers as necessary.
2. Locate foot trails to avoid concentrating runoff and provide breaks in grade as needed. Locate trails and parking areas away from natural drainage systems and divert runoff to stable areas. Limit the grade of trails on unstable, saturated, highly erosive, or easily compacted soils
3. Scale the number of boat ramps, campsites, parking areas, bathroom facilities, etc. to be commensurate with existing and anticipated needs. Facilities should not invite such use that natural features will be degraded.
4. Provide adequate barriers to minimize off-road vehicle use

B. Maintenance: Soil Disturbance and Drainage

1. Maintenance operations minimize soil disturbance around parking lots, swimming areas and campsites, through proper placement and dispersal of such facilities or by reseeding disturbed ground. Drainage from such facilities should be promoted through proper grading.
2. Maintain adequate drainage for ramps by keeping side drains functional or by maintaining drainage of road surface above ramps or by crowning (on natural surfaces).
3. Maintain adequate drainage for trails. Use mitigating measures, such as water bars, wood chips, and grass seeding, to reduce erosion on trails.
4. When roads are abandoned during reconstruction or to implement site-control, they must be reseeded and provided with adequate drainage so that periodic maintenance is not required.

III. RAMPS AND STREAM CROSSINGS

A. Legal Requirements

1. Relevant permits must be obtained prior to building bridges across streams or boat ramps. Such permits include the SPA 124 permit, the COE 404 permit, and the DNRC Floodplain Development Permit.

B. Design Considerations

1. Placement of boat ramp should be such that boats can load and unload with out difficulty and the notch in the bank where the ramp was placed does not encourage bank erosion. Extensions of boat ramps beyond the natural bank can also encourage erosion.
2. Adjust the road grade or provide drainage features (e.g. rubber flaps) to reduce the concentration of road drainage to stream crossings and boat ramps. Direct drainage flow through an adequate filtration zone and away from the ramp or crossing through the use of gravel side-drains, crowning (on natural surfaces) or 30-degree angled grooves on concrete ramps.

3. Avoid unimproved stream crossings on permanent streams. On ephemeral streams, when a culvert or bridge is not feasible, locate drive-throughs on a stable, rocky portion of the stream channel.

4. Unimproved (non-concrete) ramps should only be used when the native soils are sufficiently gravelly or rocky to withstand the use at the site and to resist erosion.

C. Installation of Stream Crossings and Ramps

1. Minimize stream channel disturbances and related sediment problems during construction of road and installation of stream crossing structures. Do not place erodible material into stream channels. Remove stockpiled material from high water zones. Locate temporary construction bypass roads in locations where the stream course will have a minimal disturbance. Time construction activities to protect fisheries and water quality.

2. Where ramps enter the stream channel, they should follow the natural streambed in order to avoid changing stream hydraulics and to optimize use of boat trailers.

3. Use culverts with a minimum diameter of 15 inches for permanent stream crossings and cross drains. Proper sizing of culverts may dictate a larger pipe and should be based on a 50-year flow recurrence interval. Install culverts to conform to the natural streambed and slope on all perennial streams and on intermittent streams that support fish or that provide seasonal fish passage. Place culverts slightly below normal stream grade to avoid culvert outfall barriers. Do not alter stream channels upstream from culverts, unless necessary to protect fill or to prevent culvert blockage. Armor the inlet and/or outlet with rock or other suitable material where needed.

4. Prevent erosion of boat ramps and the affected streambank through proper placement (so as to not catch the stream current) and hardening (rip-rap or erosion resistant woody vegetation).

5. Maintain a 1-foot minimum cover for culverts 18-36 inches in diameter, and a cover of one-third diameter for larger culverts to prevent crushing by traffic.